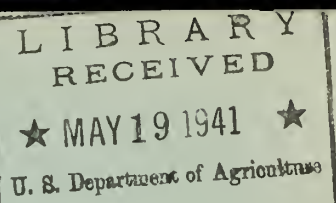


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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Office of Information

AND-27-41
May 16, 1941

Part I - ~~STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL~~

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AGRICULTURE AND NATIONAL DEFENSE

SUMMARY OF FOREIGN DEVELOPMENTS: GERMANY: Distribution of nitrogenous fertilizers during the year ending May 31, 1942, has been reduced to 90 per cent of purchases in the preceding year.

There are indications of a growing shortage in textile raw materials. New clothing ration cards now under consideration provide for a reduction in the present clothing rations.

Spring planting has been delayed and the winter crop has been adversely affected by the unusually cold and late spring throughout Germany. A retarded harvest is feared. Frosts and lack of sunshine have also hurt fruit trees.

DENMARK: It is now compulsory to observe one meatless day a week. Shipments to Germany of Danish cattle thus far this year are 60 percent under the amount agreed upon. Butter shipments, however, are slightly in excess of the agreed amount while shipments of eggs are up to the agreement. Germany is reported as having threatened drastic action unless there is a speed-up in cattle deliveries.

ITALY: Reliable sources reveal that the amount of flour allotted to individual bakeries for bread making has been reduced to 70 percent of their normal consumption. This means a reduction of 30 percent in the total bread consumption of persons who obtain their bread from bakeries. No announcement to the public was made of this control of bread consumption. It was put into operation, it is understood, during the middle of April. Producers of wheat are not affected by the bread consumption control. They are allowed to retain two quintals (7.5 bushels) of wheat each year for each member of the family and they can make their own bread. The press announced that beginning May 7 veal, mutton, lamb, beef, goat, and pork may be sold to the public or served in restaurants only on Saturday and Sunday. The increasing need of the armed forces and the preservation of livestock are given as the official reasons for reducing the number of meat days each week.

SPAIN: Cold and heavy rain in principal crop-growing regions has retarded the 1941 wheat crop from two to six weeks and spottiness has prevented official estimates of probable yields. Unofficial estimates place the crop at from 83,000,000 to 92,000,000 bushels but admit the probability of large variations. It is clearly apparent that this year's wheat crop will fall short of ration consumption needs by at least 15 percent, and that it will be necessary to continue imports of corn and barley. There is a severe shortage of nitrogenous fertilizers. Flowering of fruit trees has been retarded and it is feared lack of fungicides will again diminish the crop.

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JAPAN: In September of last year the Australians were asked by Mitsui (which handles exclusively the Japanese imports of wheat flour from Australia) to sell 300,000 metric tons of wheat for 25 percent cash and the remainder at 6 months credit. It is believed contracts involving not less than 70,000 metric tons were closed, although it is not known whether credit was granted by the Australians. During January and February of this year Mitsubishi (which handles exclusively the Japanese imports of wheat and flour from North America) tried to purchase 70,000 short tons of Canadian wheat. Finally the firm asked that it be sold at least 20,000 tons and agreed that such wheat would be sold exclusively in North China and possibly in Manchuria. After the Canadian Government had refused, allegedly, to sell any wheat because of Japan's Axis connection and possible entrance into the war, orders for 30,000 short tons were placed in the United States. Approximately 20,000 tons of that order have arrived and the remainder will arrive during May. There were scheduled to arrive in April and May, in addition to the foregoing, 6,000 short tons of American wheat flour.

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Part II - FOR ADMINISTRATIVE USE

AGRICULTURE AND NATIONAL DEFENSE

SEVEN HUNDRED LEADERS IN THE FIELDS OF MEDICINE AND PUBLIC HEALTH, social work, nursing, home economics and nutrition, agriculture, education, labor, industry, government, and community organization have been invited to attend a National Nutrition Conference for Defense, called by the President, to meet in Washington May 26, 27 and 28. The purposes of the conference as defined by National Security Administrator Paul McNutt, are to report on the present state of human nutrition in the United States and to outline the effects of inadequate nutrition on the health, efficiency, and morale of the American people. The Conference will make recommendations to the President for an immediate program of action. "In this time of national emergency, the health of all the people is one of our gravest responsibilities," McNutt said in announcing the meeting. "Only a nation of healthy people can be strong. And people are healthy only if they are adequately fed. How well fed is America? Not well enough, not nearly well enough for our own security."

Mr. M. L. Wilson, Director of the Extension Service, Department of Agriculture, and Chairman of the Advisory Nutrition Committee for the Federal Security Agency, heads a planning group for the Conference program. General sessions will be devoted to discussion of nutrition problems. Section meetings will consider definite aspects for nutrition and formulate specific recommendations for the consideration of all the delegates.

SPANNING THE GENERAL SUBJECT OF "INSECTS IN RELATION TO NATIONAL DEFENSE" the staff of the Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine is in the process of preparing a series of 23 brochures, setting forth the best methods thus far developed to combat the various insects that attack concentrations of men and materials. Nine of the brochures have already been completed. Copies have been forwarded to Army and Navy authorities, together with the offer to supply others to national Army cantonments, or any field officers concerned. The circulars thus far published cover termites, powder-post beetles, fabric insects, mosquitoes, food insects, bedbugs, cockroaches, and fleas.

TWO TROPICAL PLANT SPECIALISTS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE left Washington this week for an agricultural survey of Mexico and other Central American countries. The survey, under the direction of the Latin American division of the Department, will probe the possibilities of developing in the American tropics products which the United States now import from more distant tropical regions. In the past plant explorers from the Department have visited Central American countries searching for plants that could be grown in this country. Except for the rubber surveys which have just been completed, the present survey will be the first directed toward development of crops to be grown in Central America. Among the important plants that might be developed as crops in Central America -- and which cannot be grown in this country--are: abaca, imported from the Philippines for manufacturing rope; cinchona, imported from the East Indies for manufacture of quinine; chia, imported from China for manufacture of oil used in the paint and varnish industry; derris, imported from the East Indies for use in insecticides; kapok, imported from the East Indies and used in upholstery and in life preservers; and licorice, imported from Asia Minor and used in the manufacture of chewing tobacco.

SUMMARY OF FOREIGN DEVELOPMENTS: EGYPT: Announcement in Egypt that the United States Maritime Commission had established steamship services between the Red Sea area and the United States was welcomed alike by importers and exporters. Egyptian commercial circles consider that the service will make it possible for Egypt to purchase chemicals, fertilizers, machinery and other goods from the United States and Canada as well as to export Egyptian crops, particularly cotton. It is contemplated that all vessels arriving in Egypt from the United States loaded with war materials will secure return cargoes from Egypt for foreign markets.

NEW ZEALAND: The problems arising from the curtailment of meat and butter exports to the United Kingdom are no nearer solution although there is a tendency at the moment to view the matter more calmly. There are indications that more meat may be taken by the United Kingdom than was at first supposed. Shipping scarcity is of course the controlling factor and developments are impossible to foresee. A committee has been formed, consisting of New Zealand and Australian officials, to study problems arising out of declining export markets for products in which both are concerned.

Efforts are being made to explore the possibility of shipping butter to the west coast of Canada and to the United States of America but no arrangement appears to have been reached as yet. The Government is endeavoring to increase cheese production by approximately 50 percent which is regarded as the maximum possible under current conditions. The Government has set up a special committee of the Cabinet to consider post war economy. The head of this committee has stated privately that it is aware that radical changes may have to be made in the type of products marketed so successfully during the past hundred years. He anticipates that cheese production will have a promising future, and that meat production should be good after the war, but that butter will not recover its pre-war market. He also expressed the opinion that wool may be in good demand for a brief period after the termination of the war but that it would soon encounter serious competition from artificial fibers. The production of soybeans is being studied with a view to determining if that crop is feasible for New Zealand.

A New Zealand mission, known as the "Langstone Mission" will leave soon for the United States, by air. Its objectives will be: (1) to study possibilities of a market in the United States for New Zealand exports, especially meat and dairy products as a counterbalance to American food exports now necessarily being made to Great Britain during the war period; (2) to look into the question of transshipping by steamer and rail from Pacific to Atlantic ports of New Zealand exports to Great Britain; and (3) to make preliminary arrangements for the establishment of a New Zealand Legation in Washington.

SWEDEN: In discussing Germany's efforts to introduce a planned economy in Europe and in the world, the Chief of the Commercial Division of the Swedish Foreign Office stated that Sweden rejected any plans which in the final analysis involved a recession in economic levels and which, in his opinion, would be the effect of the proposed new order.

BELGIUM: The Germans continue to divert supplies intended for the population at large to industrial communities working for German interests despite agreements to the contrary. It is insisted by the Germany military authorities that one-half of the condensed milk shipments imported from the Netherlands intended for exclusive distribution to children shall go to factory canteens.

The authorities collected for centralized distribution 195,000 of the 600,000 tons of last year's domestic grain crop. However, this assured the supply only up to February 15, 1941. Supplies sufficient for another two months were obtained by the purchase of 80,000 tons of rye from Germany, which has promised 50,000 more.

The meat supply is estimated to be sufficient to provide an assurance of a ration of fifty grams for two years if the Germans do not requisition it. Belgian farmers are reluctant to slaughter because of the low fixed prices and local Belgian authorities are reluctant to requisition livestock, fearing that the meat obtained would be taken by the Germans. A reduction in the meat ration to 35 grams has accordingly taken place.

The one million German troops maintained in Belgium received rations until January three times those of the local population, which were supplied almost entirely from local sources. The Germans have relented somewhat on the supply problem since January and are now providing a portion of the supplies. Under the terms of the Hague Convention the Belgians claim that they are not obliged to feed these troops on the ground that many of them are mobile rather than regularly stationed in Belgium and that their feeding leaves the supplies available for the civilian population inadequate.

BRITISH MALAYA: The Colonial Office in London advised that the Government of Malaya had expressed regret in overlooking the trade agreement provisions regarding tobacco duty preferences. Malaya agreed to rectify the position by raising the preferential duty on manufactured tobacco in retail containers from 1.50 Straits Settlements dollars to 1.65 dollars per pound, effective April 28, 1941. The new rates of duty will therefore be 1.65 dollars preferential and 1.75 dollars general, thus preserving the margin of preference of 10 cents per pound. The rates are applicable in all Malaya including the Straits Settlements. (The Straits Settlements dollar is equivalent to 47 cents in United States currency.)

JAPAN: Effective May 7, butcher shops in Kobe were closed for a period of 10 days each month. On four fixed days each month, i.e., once a week, restaurants may not serve meat. There is a scarcity of meat. The price control situation is unsatisfactory and stock raisers are withholding their cattle from the market. No potatoes have been available at leading Kobe hotels and restaurants during the past week.

Unfavorable weather conditions are reported to have damaged the Japanese wheat crop considerably. A household ration system for wheat flour was enforced in Tokyo, effective April 25. Reports from all major Japanese urban areas indicate a general wheat shortage. Arrangements have been made for the importation of 4,000,000 bushels of Manchurian buckwheat, of which Tokyo will take 80 percent. Tokyo also is planning to mix Manchurian kaoliang with rice since the use of wheat for that purpose has been discontinued.

